

Legislature, the concept of a united Bay City became reality on April 10, 1905, when a common council, consisting of 34 aldermen from 17 wards in the combined city convened and made history.

Mr. Speaker, in the 100 years since the unification of Bay City and West Bay City, we have seen a town rise from a collection of small lumber villages to one of Michigan's largest and most vibrant cities. The shipyards and sawmills of the past have given way to worldwide corporations that create opportunities each day. Bay City's rich heritage is seen in its renowned architecture and diverse history. For generations, the kind hearts and friendly manner of the residents have made Bay City a warm welcoming community. They are the true nucleus of the city.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Robert Belleman, City Manager, for his vision in recognizing the need to acknowledge this milestone in Bay City's history. I am proud to call him my colleague, my constituent, and my friend.

Mr. Speaker, once again I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Bay City, Michigan on the 100th anniversary of its unification.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BEXAR COUNTY JUDGE KEITH BAKER

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Judge Keith Baker for his long standing career of service to his country and community.

A Vietnam veteran who had served at Cam Ranh Bay and Chu Lai, Mr. Baker is no stranger to dedicated commitment and sacrifice for his country. During his stay at Chu Lai, Keith Baker worked at the Adjutant 27th Surgical Hospital. He helped to serve our troops where his assistance was greatly needed.

Having started a distinguished law career in the field of law in 1973, Keith Baker has over 30 years experience serving the needs of our citizens. He has also authored numerous articles for the American Bankruptcy Institute Journal. Mr. Baker additionally serves as Trustee to numerous community organizations, including the Texas Military Institute, the Texas Bar Foundation, the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, and the San Antonio Manufacturers Association.

Judge Baker was first elected in Bexar County as Justice of the Peace in 1982. A dedicated civil servant, Judge Baker works hard for our communities. He specializes in misdemeanor criminal cases, civil cases involving our businesses, consumer cases, and tort.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Keith Baker is an exemplary public servant. I am proud to have the opportunity to thank him here today for all he has done for his fellow Texans.

VISA DENIAL TO INDIAN OFFICIAL LEADS TO BURNING OF PEPSI PLANT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the United States government denied a visa to Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat, due to the state government's complicity in the massacre of Muslims there and his insensitive statements about minorities. His visa was revoked under the law that prohibits those responsible for violations of religious freedom from getting visas. This was the right thing to do, and I salute those who made this decision.

According to the March 25 issue of India-West, the denial of a visa to Mr. Modi was met with attacks from the Indian government. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who, as a Sikh, is a member of a religious minority himself, complained in Parliament that "we do not believe it is appropriate . . . to make a subjective judgment question a constitutional authority in India." The Foreign Ministry said that the denial of Mr. Modi's visa "is uncalled for and displays lack of courtesy and sensitivity toward a constitutionally elected chief minister of a state of India." Of course, they completely neglected to mention Mr. Modi's lack of courtesy and sensitivity towards the 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims killed in the riots that his government helped organize. India's Human Rights Commission held Mt. Modi and his government responsible for the massacre.

The Indian government officially stated that the decision showed "a lack of courtesy and sensitivity" and that their "sovereignty" was violated by the decision. This is the standard argument of tyrants. It is the argument countries like Red China make when they are criticized.

On March 19 in New Delhi, India-West reported, fanatical Hindu nationalist fundamentalists affiliated with the militant organization Bajrang Dal rioted against the United States because Mr. Modi was denied his visa. They barged into a Pepsi-Cola warehouse, smashed bottles of Pepsi, and set fire to the building. The warehouse was partially burned. About a dozen workers fled. The rioters also ransacked a nearby Pepsi office. Another group protested the U.S. consulate in Bombay. They carried signs reading "Down With the United States." Some Bajrang Dal members tried to enter the visa application center in Ahmedabad. Modi himself said, "Let us pledge to work for such a day that an American would have to stand in line for entry into Gujarat." He accused the United States of trying to "impose its laws on other countries." He urged India to deny visas to American officials.

Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest chapter in India's ongoing repression of its minorities, which has been well documented in this House over the years, and its virulent hatred of America. Why do we spend our time, energy, and money supporting such a country?

The time has come to hold India's feet to the fire. Denying Mr. Modi a visa was simply a small first step, and a good one. We must do more. The time has come to stop our aid and trade with India until all people enjoy the full flower of human rights and to support self-determination for all the peoples and nations

seeking their freedom through a free and fair plebiscite. The essence of democracy is the right to self-determination. As the world's oldest and strongest democracy, it is up to the United States to take these measures in support of freedom for all.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the India-West article of March 25 into the RECORD at this time.

[From the India-West, Mar. 25, 2005]

PEPSI WAREHOUSE BURNED IN VISA DENIAL UPROAR—Continued from page A1

The riots were sparked by the burning of a train coach by Muslims in Godhra, killing 59 Hindu kar sevaks.

Modi was denied a diplomatic visa to travel to the United States and his existing tourist/business visa was revoked under the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act that bars people responsible for violations of religious freedom from getting a visa.

Modi had been scheduled to address a gathering of Indian American groups and motel owners in New York, Florida and in New Jersey.

India slammed the decision, saying it showed a "lack of courtesy and sensitivity," and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh criticized the American decision in Parliament.

"The American government has been clearly informed . . . we do not believe that it is appropriate to use allegations or anything less than due legal process to make a subjective judgment to question a constitutional authority in India," Singh told the Rajya Sabha.

Responding to opposition leader Jaswant Singh's submission that the decision was unacceptable, Manmohan Singh said, "We agree that this is not a matter of partisan politics, but rather a matter of concern over a point of principle. Our prompt and firm response clearly shows our principled stand in this matter."

Earlier, Indian officials summoned Ambassador Mulford's deputy Robert Blake "to lodge a strong protest."

"This action . . . is uncalled for and displays lack of courtesy and sensitivity toward a constitutionally elected chief minister of a state of India," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement, expressing the government's "deep concern and regret."

The U.S. stood by its decision after a review sought by India. Mulford, who was out of town when the news broke March 18, said the U.S. decision was aimed at Modi alone, and not Gujaratis. He also denied it would affect ties with India.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Adam Erel said the U.S. response was based on a finding by India's National Human Rights Commission that held Modi's government responsible for the 2002 Hindu-Muslim violence in the state, India's worst in a decade.

The decision led to widespread uproar in parts of Gujarat. A day after the decision, nearly 150 Bajrang Dal activists barged into the warehouse of U.S.-based PepsiCo in the Surat, smashed bottles and set fire to the place, said Dharmesh Joshi, a witness. The warehouse was partially burned.

A witness said about a dozen workers at the warehouse fled during the attack and firefighters doused the flames.

The protesters also ransacked a nearby PepsiCo office and demonstrated outside the American consulate in Mumbai. Some carried placards reading: "Down with the United States," "Boycott the U.S. goods and the Americans."

Up to 150 Bajrang Dal activists also tried to enter the U.S. visa application center in Ahmedabad but were turned back by police.